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# Company: Sorry about stink from paper plant

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONGVIEW — Weyerhaeuser officials have apologized for an accident that spread a putrid smell across Southwest Washington and Northwest Oregon last week.

The company also said it will pay the bills of anyone who needed medical attention after breathing fumes from Tuesday's mishap at its paper plant here.

The accident occurred when 8,700 gallons of sulfate turpentine spilled into a water-treatment holding pond when a tank overflowed. The odor it produced, described as similar to cat urine or rotten eggs, generated complaints from Olympia to the north, Portland to the south, and Astoria, Ore., and Washington's Long Beach to the west.

Washington state health officials said the odor was not dangerous, but could cause nausea, dizziness, headaches and eye and throat irritation.

Weyerhaeuser officials said the company already has rerouted plumbing and installed automatic valves in hopes of preventing similar accidents in the future.

"We have to prove to the community at large and to the agencies that we have the ability to control our systems on a reliable basis, or your community will take away our license to operate," said Richard Gozon, company executive vice president.

Cowlitz County Commissioner Bill Lehning remained skeptical, saying the company must alert emergency officials to mill accidents sooner. As they did following a major chlorine release in July 1994, local emergency officials learned of the accident from public complaints before they were notified by the company.

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